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SUBJECT: UNSC AFTERMATH: CARICOM HAPPY WITH PANAMA, UPSET
WITH PROCESS

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) On November 3, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states unanimously supported the compromise nomination of Panama as the candidate to the United Nations Security Council from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC). However, Ambassadors to the UN from CARICOM countries were not pleased with the handling of the compromise.

¶2. (C) Crispin Gregoire, Ambassador of Dominica to the UN, told PolOff in telcon that CARICOM countries were not opposed to the consensus but were disappointed that the press learned of the Panama compromise before GRULAC members did. According to Ambassador Gregoire, the delegation from Ecuador, which chaired the compromise between Guatemala and Venezuela, went straight to the media after brokering the agreement to nominate Panama. Ambassador Gregoire said that he and his CARICOM colleagues first learned of the compromise through the British Broadcasting Corporation and Reuters. When CARICOM Ambassadors complained, they were told that GRULAC members received a fax announcing the decision; the Dominican mission had no record of having received such a fax.

¶3. (U) At a GRULAC meeting on November 2, CARICOM Ambassadors stated that they could not endorse the Panama compromise until they consulted with their capitals. On the afternoon of November 3, CARICOM informed GRULAC that they supported the decision.

¶4. (SBU) Judging from the November 6 telcon, it appears November 3 and 5 press on this issue was largely accurate, with a few minor errors. As of November 5, the Barbados Sun stated that the Caribbean nations' asking for more time "effectively forc(ed) a postponement of the decision by the (GRULAC)." However, in a November 3 article, the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) correctly stated that "a formal reply on the matter, after ratification by regional capitals, could be made as early as Friday."

¶5. (U) The CMC quoted Dr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and current CARICOM Chairman, as saying, "The UN vote will be among matters to be discussed at a CARICOM Bureau meeting in Barbados over the weekend." Contacts in the Foreign Ministries of Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines told PolOff this meeting was tentatively scheduled but postponed. Bureau meetings tend to convene biannually, and the last CARICOM

Bureau meeting was October 17, 2006. The CARICOM Bureau is a quorum of the current, previous, and upcoming CARICOM chairpersons. The current Bureau consists of Prime Ministers Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis, Patrick Manning of Trinidad and Tobago, and Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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